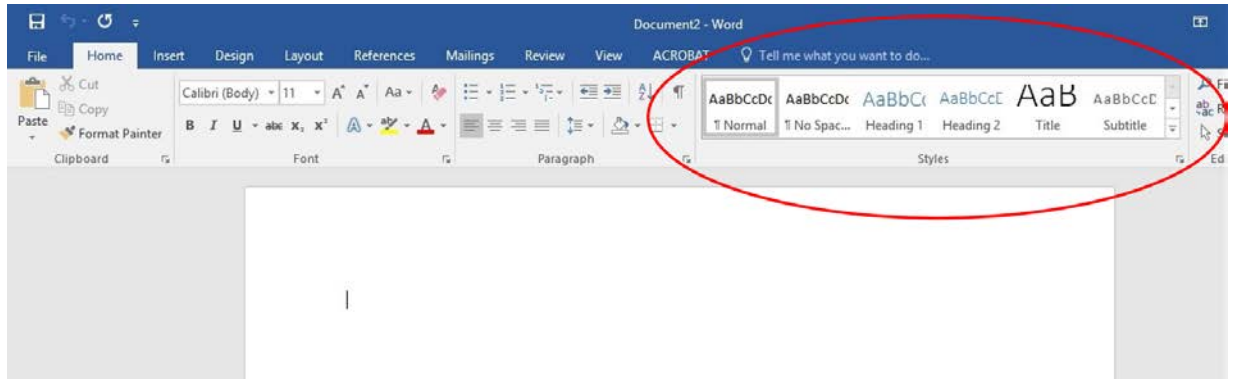
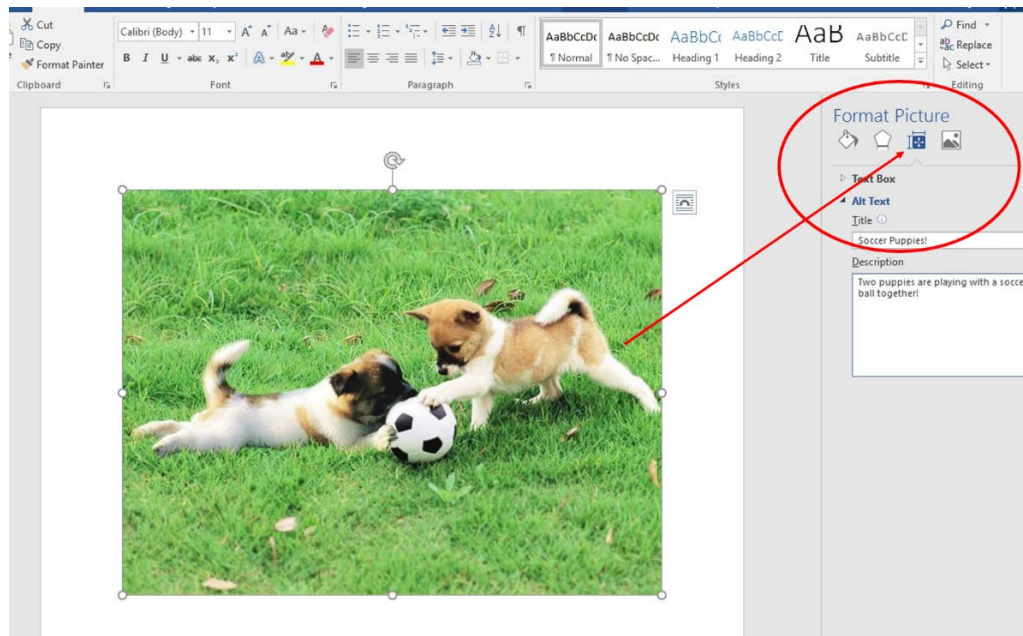


## Guide to Make Word Documents ADA Compliant

- **Use Word's built in Headings** – This helps those with sight issues and those using screen readers to quickly see the structure of the document and helps the screen readers separate normal text from headings. Word's built in headings are located under the Home tab in the Styles section as seen below!



- **Alternative Text for Images** – Alternative text is needed to provide a non-visual person a means to know what the image is about. If you insert a photo into a Word document, it MUST have an alternative text added to it! Alternative text should be no more than 140 characters! There are two ways to do this!
  - Right click on the photo and select format picture
  - There will be 4 tabs that allow you to edit the photo, hit the 3<sup>rd</sup> one that looks like four arrows in a grey box with two bars around it (see image below)

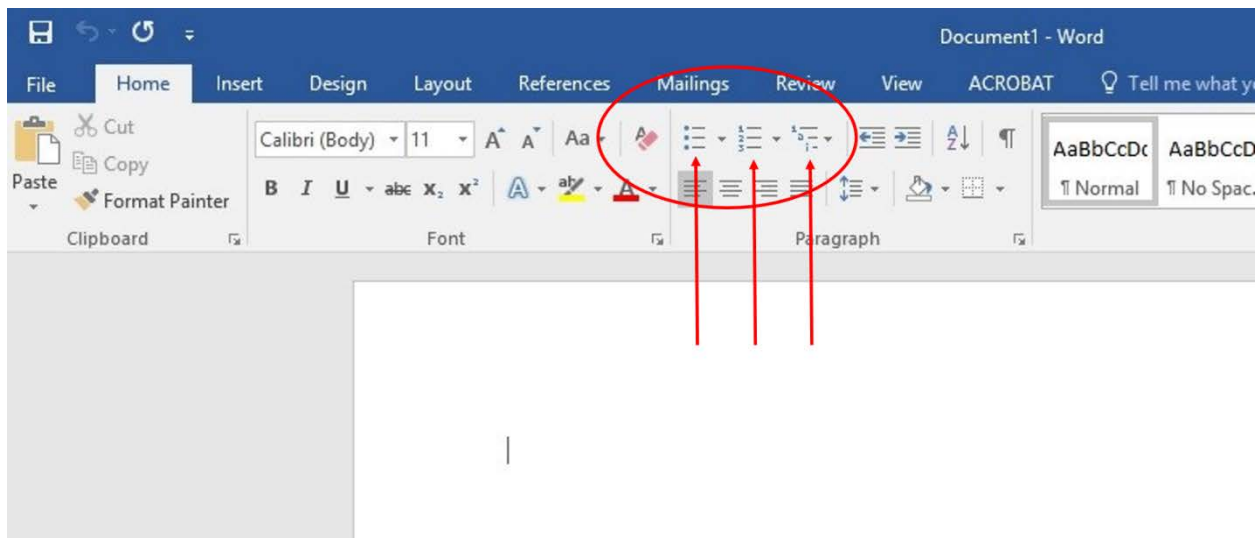


- Once here you will see two options > text box and Alt Text. Hit Alt Text and put in a photo title and description

**OR**

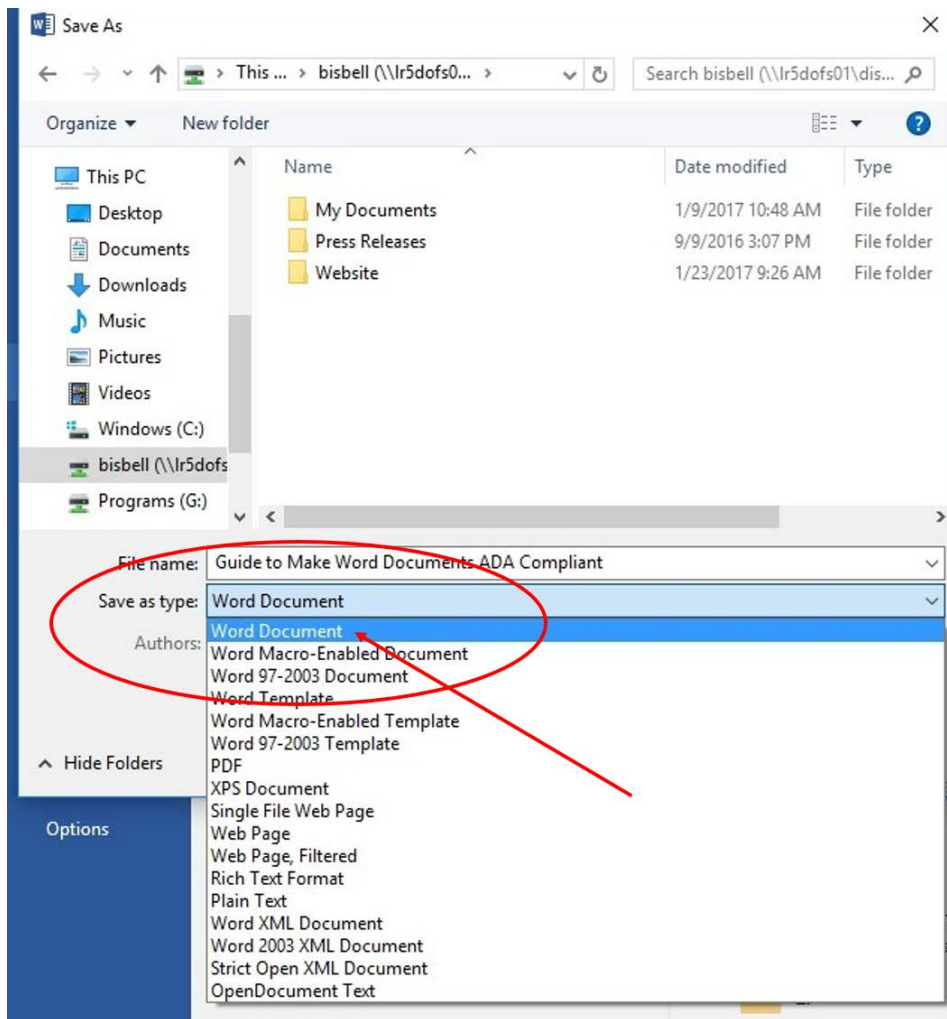
- To add alternative text right click on the photo and select picture.
  - You will see at Alt Text tab as the last tab on the right.
  - Put a description of the photo so a non-visual person is able to understand what the photo represents.
- Another way to show Alternative text is to put a caption of the photo next to it. This means that you write a small description or sentence about the photo instead. Alternative text and captions should be no more than 140 characters!
  - Photos acting as decorations to the document and aren't essential to the informative part only need to have Alternative Text that says `alt=""` (alt + an equals sign + two quotation marks works best for screen readers to know this is a decorative image.)
  - Image types in Word that can be given alternative text include:
    - Pictures
    - Illustrations
    - Images of text
    - Shapes
    - Charts
    - SmartArt
    - Embedded objects
  - Screen Reader software is able to identify images so avoid using phrases such as “image of...” or “graphic of...” or “picture of...” as these will be redundant and may confuse the reader.
  - **Data Tables** – Make sure your tables serve their purpose, to provide data in a grid or matrix style with no images or un-needed characters.
  - **Links** – When using links in a document always use a hyperlink and not the url itself. For example, a screen reader may have trouble recognizing <http://www.google.com> is a great search engine, where as it would recognize, [Google](#) is a great search engine. The Google hyperlink is the exact same web address, but the screen reader will now recognize it as text that needs to be clicked!
    - To hyperlink text simply highlight the text, right click it and select the hyperlink option. Then paste the desired url in the Address field at the bottom of the pop up window.

- It is important to avoid saying phrases such as “click here” or “for more information go here” as this may become confusing to a screen reader. Instead type a title or label that is unique, but understandable to the reader as to where the clickable link will take you.
- **List & Columns** – Sometimes you may need to create lists or columns and may just tab over to indent the content. While this provides a good visual structure for you, it doesn't provide the document structure needed for assistive technology users.
  - In order to properly use a list or column use the bullet point or numbers provided by word. This will help a screen reader understand the content and read it in the correct order. See image below to know where the bullet point and numbers options are located.



- **Accessibility Checker** – Once you have completed your Word document, it is now time to check it for accessibility. To do this click the File tab at the top left > then hit Info. > You will then see an option that says “Check for Issues” > Click this and it will show a drop down menu with the second choice saying “Check for Accessibility”
  - The Accessibility checker will display on your screen in the right pane and show you Inspection Results for your document.
  - You will see three sections in the Inspection Results - Errors, Warnings and Tips.
  - Errors – Content that makes a document very difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to access (Ex: an image with no alt text)
  - Warnings – Content that in most, but not all cases make the document difficult for people with disabilities to access. (Ex: a link with text that is not descriptive for its function)

- Tips – content that people with disabilities can access, but that might be better organized or presented (Ex: skipping from a first-level heading to a third-level heading, instead of going in order)
- Clicking on an item in the Inspection Results will highlight the corresponding item in the document and displays the Additional Information Section:
  - Why Fix: explains why the issue impacts accessibility
  - How to Fix: suggestions for repairing the issue.
- When saving your document always save it as a Word Document to ensure the correct file extension is used in order to make the document accessible online (see image below).



- **Convert Word document to PDF** – Word documents are easy to manipulate and change by an end user. To ensure this doesn't happen and to make it easier for a screen

reader to read the document it is recommended that you convert your Word documents to PDFs for web use! An important thing to note is that by converting your Word document to a PDF (assuming you have checked it for accessibility) is that the PDF will keep all of the accessibility information in your document.

- To learn how to properly convert a Word Document to a PDF see the “Guide to Make PDFs ADA Compliant” document!

**For more help on Word Accessibility you can visit [WebAIM's](#) step-by-step walkthrough on how to ensure your Word document is ADA Compliant!**